Rays of friendship: Peri's three-way video chat and Adora's crush

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by lefemmerouge

Summary

In the aftermath of fighting in Japan and the assault on V.I.L.E. Island, the Crystal Gems and their newfound friends are divided across the world, some in Siberia, some returning to Beach City, and some remaining on the island. Adora pushes Peri to bring them all together, allowing her to connect with old friends in Etheria, Bow and Glimmer, and create new ones, causing emotional tension and conflict…

Notes

I extensively used the map (which I made) for story locations. I again used "Peri" as an abbreviation of Peridot in this narrative. There is a lot more dialogue in this than I usually do, so I'm experimenting around with it in this narrative. I tried it out a bit in my previous story, "Lapis and Peridot's Talk Show, Carmen's Desperate Move, and A Return to Japan," but am going even further here.

Comments are welcome and appreciated.

Update on 1/13/25: This fic was cross-posted onto Squidge World with the name "Rays of friendship: Peri's three-way video chat, Gem fusion in Siberia, and Adora's crushes." There were changes made including improvements to sentence structure, wording, spacing and description, overwriting the previously flawed text. In doing this I had forgotten have many horror elements I had incorporated and how disturbing it can be. I did not remove those elements, I only improved them.

Update on 3/19/26: Added fanart which I created back in November 2019, showing Adora internally gushing about how much she likes Carmen and posted it on Tumblr. In that post, I also noted other places this fic has been posted: Wattpad and Asianfanfics. The fanart is, admittedly, not the best thing I've ever created, but I put my heart into it, so that's what matters.

See the end of the work for more notes

A.C.M.E. helicopters landed near the candy settlement, as the sun began setting in Yokohama. Lapis, Peridot, Pumpkin, and Stevonnie were there to greet them. Anthy untied the ropes bounding the V.I.L.E. operatives, with A.C.M.E. agents replacing them with cold metal handcuffs. She and Utena retired to their house in Miura. On their way out of the city, both helicopters flew over the settlement. That was a clear mistake. Candy cannons went off, firing their projectiles with deadly accuracy. One helicopter, containing Tigress and the henchmen, escaped without a scratch. It sped away to the secure A.C.M.E. hideout in Siberia.

However, the other had been damaged. It whirled in a downward spiral toward the settlement. The helicopter hit the ground outside the settlement and exploded. The pilots were killed on impact. While Lapis tried to catch the prisoners, she could only save El Topo and Le Chevre. Paper Star was out of her grasp. Stevonnie, Pumpkin, and Peri could do nothing. They stood helplessly as they watched a horrific scene unfold before their eyes.

Once inside the settlement, Paper Star's body was covered by some pink creatures, who had not turned into full-fledged candy beings. They caramelized her as she screamed in pain. El Topo and Le Chevre watched in disbelief, while Lapis flew them away as quickly as she could. Paper Star had been transformed turned her into something completely new. It was a sea change from her previous form. She had become... *Candy Star.*

Her hair still had its heterochromic style, a mix of grey and white. Her head looked like a pink gumdrop, complete with purplish lipstick. The rest of her body was the same as she had a humanoid appearance. She wore a dark bluish suit and a neon green jacket, coupled with white leggings and white candy boots. Instead of throwing paper, she now threw pizzelles. Her new personality did not resemble her old psychopathic personality. In the latter she loved inflicting pain on others to get *what she wanted*. She was now much sweeter but not as smart, although she'd retained some athletic abilities.

Peri, Pumpkin, and Stevonnie retreated to the Peri-Jet. They prepared to leave Japan. None wanted to visit Utena and Anthy again, recognizing the importance of *not* smothering them with additional visits. As they wanted by the ship, Lapis and Peri began texting each other. Lapis began typing.

"Peri, I'm leaving that dreadful secret hideaway in Siberia now. It's so…cold. Pearl, Adora, and Garnet told me to say hello."

Peri replied. "Lapis, that's great. We are hanging out by my wonderful Peri-Jet near Yokohama."

Lapis texted back, "Yeah, I remember where that is. See you there!"

Peri composed and sent one message back: "Best wishes on your flight through the sky, water wing goddess!"

Lapis snorted and giggled so hard at Peri's text she almost dropped her phone into the Tunguska Sea, a body of water wider than the Mediterranean Sea. It was many times larger than the Black Sea. Due to the fact she no longer had to carry oafs like El Topo and Le Chevre, she could fly *even faster*. As she yawned, she passed across a thinly populated Eastern Russia and moderately populated Manchuria. Before she knew it, she could be reunited with her *lovely* Peri. She hoped this whole affair would be over because she hated fighting V.I.L.E. Their despicable nature made her think negatively about humans and the world. If there were such awful people out there, what

right did she have to enjoy herself and accept others? The thought crossed her mind, but it dissipated into thin air when she saw Peri.

Winding through the air, she landed in Peri's arms, which quickly embraced her. She whispered in her ear that she'd like to "go home." Asking if she'd like to fly back instead of stepping into her hypersonic jet's cockpit, Lapis responded by rubbing her eyes, saying she'd like to rest for a bit. Accepting this, Peri, holding Lapis in her lap, sat in the pilot's chair. She fired up the engines, with Pumpkin and Stevonnie jumping in after her. The plane took off from the ground with a jolt. It boomed in the air as it went to a hypersonic speed, en route to Beach City.

In the meantime, Pearl, Adora, and Garnet sat in the secret A.C.M.E. hideout in Siberia. Like Peri, Pumpkin, Lapis, and Stevonnie, who had departed Japan, they also hoped to go home. Even though each of them had volunteered to accompany the imprisoned evildoers, they were beginning to regret it. While battling the Homeworld Gems and the Diamond overlords had been a challenge, combating those enemies was seemingly better than fighting unpleasant V.I.L.E. figures. None of these villains appeared to have any value in the world.

For Adora it was different. The cold temperatures made her miss Etheria, in some ways, even though she had been born on *another planet*, with her parents likely killed by the Horde. Suddenly, an idea popped in her head. She texted Peri, asking if she could borrow her tablet for a "special project."

Back in the Beach House, Peri grumbled. She showed everyone else Adora's text. Steven and Connie had unfused, each with their own lives to attend to. Connie's parents wanted her to return home after the long trip to Japan. Both suggested Peri agree to Adora’s request. As Pumpkin laid in her lap, Lapis had a better idea. "Maybe you should ask *what* Adora wants to use the tablet for, so I don't need to fly you there...and neither of us needs to suffer from this dreaful cold weather."

Peri liked this suggestion and texted back Adora, inquiring why she wanted to use the tablet for a so-called "special project." After recounting the low temperatures in the base, she admitted what she meant: using the tablet to talk to her friends on Etheria, specifically mentioning Bow and Glimmer. Peri's ears perked up, especially when she read the word "Bow," and she knew what had to be done. She could do a collect video call. However, for this to work, it would require that someone in the Siberian base had a camera phone. Reading Peri's message, she inquired if Garnet or Pearl had a phone so she could video chat with her friends in Etheria.

Pearl enthusiastically pulled out her cell phone. She texted Peri back, her plan getting the "green light." Almost immediately, Adora called her, so both could continue their conversation.

"Hi, Peridot! I am *freezing my ass off* in this base. It's damn horrible. How are you doing in Beach City and what happened in Japan?"

Peridot, replied, telling her, "Oh, not much, Adora, just some lowlifes who tried to mess with us, like some lady who threw paper stars, a guy who tunneled in the ground, some lady with sharp claws, and another who had enhanced strength. We just got back in Beach City." She then added, "I'm going to patch you through to Bow. I *sure hope* this inter-dimensional video recorder works. It might take a while because the signal needs to travel to the Moon Base, then through the Panama Wormhole to... Etheria itself."

After waiting a couple of minutes, a clicking sound could be heard. Bow's kinky Afro buzz could be seen, his eyes, which were dark, almost black in color, stared directly at the screen. He waved

hello and began speaking into the camera. "Hey, Peridot! I wondered when you were going to call us!"

"Us?" Peri bewilderedly answered. Glimmer stepped into the camera's view, with a big smile on her face, clearly happy to see Peri.

"Great to hear from you! We are so glad you called! A lot has been going on since you left. The trials against the Horde are starting and the archives of Etheria is being expanded. What about you all, what have you been up to?"

Peri excitedly replied, "Well, I can't speak for everyone, but me, Lapis, Steven, and Connie fought off some evil people near this candy settlement with our pet Pumpkin!"

Pumpkin wagged her tail and barked excitedly as Lapis softly petted her. "You…have a sentient pumpkin as a pet. That is…*interesting*. I didn't know you had that. Adora, what about you? How is Earth treating you?"

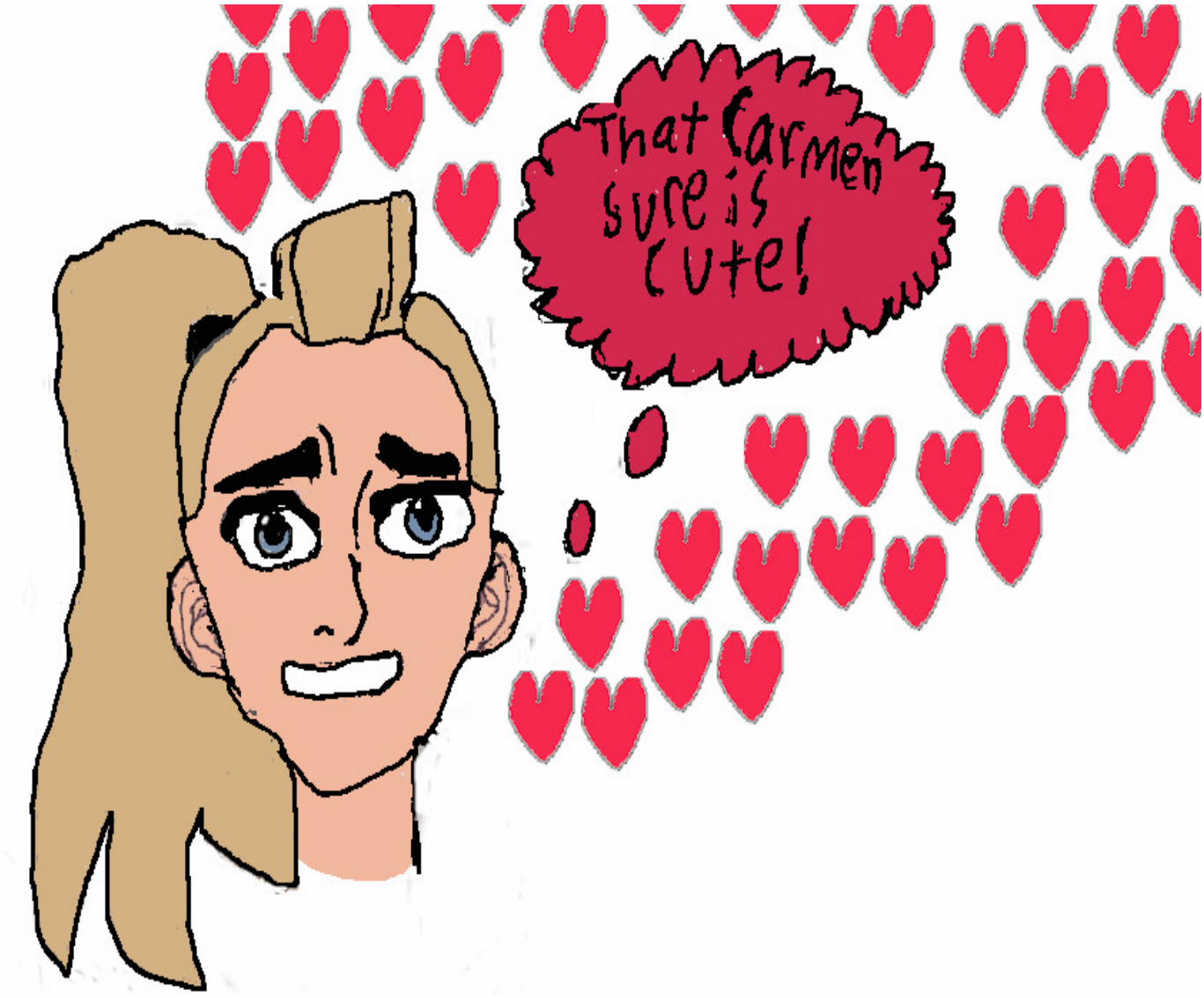
Adora told her friends that it had been a bit of adjustment, that she is still getting used to Earth, but that she loved "the people I've met, such as Bismuth, a guardian and blacksmith who can transform her arms into all sorts of stuff, like hammers, scissors, and whatnot. It's so cool."

This surprised Glimmer. She followed up, adding "Oh, I'd *love* to meet her…even if we can only do so virtually…for now. You *should* come back sometime to visit. It makes sense why you left, with Light Hope being a genocidal monster and all, but we miss you, right... Bow?"

Bow chimed in. He said, "Yeah, Glimmer is right. Mermista, Frosta, Perfuma, and even Entrapta, the latter who is awaiting trial right now, all would *like to see you*. We only have the Best Friend Duo, but maybe we can have the Best Friend Squad virtually. It's the best we can do for now..."

As Adora shook with a chill, Pearl and Garnet sent their greetings, neither appearing like they would say anything more. But this couldn't be further from the truth.

Pearl began speaking confidently, recounting their exploits. "Adora is *such a great friend.* I get why you all miss her. She fought wonderfully by my side when we assaulted a fortress of evildoers, in an attack which she helped plan. You know, she loves strategizing, which *I* really appreciate as a person who likes organization and order. There's one person she didn't mention to you: Carmen Sandiego, a master thief who steals from other thieves, a person who I think she is 'fascinated' with."



This is fanart I created specifically for this fic when it was first published in mid-November 2019, and is supposed to indicate how Adora feels about Carmen internally. She has a big crush on her.

Bow and Glimmer were surprised. Adora had *never* openly discussed who she liked on Etheria apart from Catra, who she now detested. Bow approached the subject delicately. He didn't want to cause any divisions between himself and Adora. "So, Adora, do tell us about this new friend of yours. What's she like? Can we meet her sometime?"

Adora trembled a little bit and her feet shuffled, caught off guard by Pearl bringing this up, her cheeks pinkening like the opening of a carnation. Breathing deeply, she attempted to respond, trying to be as upbeat as humanely possible. “Bow and…Glimmer…Carmen is *wonderful*! I was drawn to her after seeing her long, elegant brown hair blowing in the wind after she arrived unannounced on the beach and an impromptu song she sang. *What a gorgeous sight!* I loved hanging out with her in Japan and fighting those evildoers on the island by her side."

This talk caught Glimmer a little off guard. Interested, she asked a pointed question. "Do…you have a crush on her? Because it certainly sounds like you do. And that's completely okay. We'll accept you for who you are, no matter what. We don't judge. That would be wrong."

Apprehensive, Adora didn't know what to say. She told Glimmer that she didn't know if she had a crush because she hadn't seen her many times, but that she'd "like to hang out with her *more*, but she probably has her own friends, although two of her friends *were transformed* into candy. She never really appeared to be interested in me. Even when I embraced Pearl as a true friend on the island, after she shot that beefy woman in the back with a weapon of some kind, she just wanted to move forward and defeat the villains. There was no time for chit-chat. I don't know if she is the type of person who lets her hair down."

Glimmer continued her questioning. "Do you like her because she has long flowing hair, like the light blonde hair you had when you changed into She-Ra? Because it sounds like that *could* be part of the reason."

Adora breathed deeply. She wanted to be as honest with her friend as she could. "I didn't think about that, Glimmer, but subconsciously perhaps I am yearning for my long hair *again* and maybe that's part of why I like her…But she is a *really kind person* who wears a lot of cool outfits, so I appreciate that. I only had that warrior outfit, that dress I wore to the Princess Prom, and that outfit I wore all the time with the cut sleeves and turtleneck, through…"

The conversation went on like that for some time, and Peri tuned it out. She almost regretted connecting Adora to her tablet and those in Etheria. She didn't mind talking about fashion, she felt they were yammering on for too long. Preparing to push a button on her tablet which would end the call, Glimmer got up and left suddenly, remarking she had to return to "princess duties": overseeing the trials. Although they were in peacetime, their work wasn't done.

Peri took advantage of this opportunity and break in the conversation to chat with Bow. "Have you come up with any other cool inventions since we last saw you? I mean, you were a tech master, right?"

Bow replied that he had "been tinkering around *a little*. I created this arrow that creates a huge explosion of color in the air with a crackling sound when shot into the air."

She asked him if it was just fireworks. He didn't know that word, mentioned how busy they all were with dehordification, adding "wartime is stressful, but peacetime is *just as much work*! It's so infuriating."

He then asked, "How are you and Lapis doing?"

Peri began saying they were great, part a video chat, when Lapis piped up. "We created *our own talk show* on the internet! Both of us are so excited about it! Maybe we can have *you* on as a guest sometime."

Bow had no idea what the "internet" or a "talk show" was, but he wanted to be a good friend. He offered to help.

Lapis explained that a talk show "is where one or more people discuss various topics, interview others about what they are doing. It's a *lot of fun*."

He told her that she would have to show him how a talk show works and about the "internet." He added, "technology here on Etheria, but there's no interconnected system or anything, just that weird M.A.R.A. system my dads stumbled upon when helping us in their library."

Peri tried to move the conversation forward, asking whether he had anything else to share. He made one last comment. "No, Peridot, I think that's it…except that *upcoming trial of Catra*. She's the highest-ranking Horde prisoner we have after Hordak got killed…you know, by Horde soldiers. We'll be counting on your testimony, Adora, so she can be *brought to justice* for her crimes."

Adora's ears perked up when she heard Catra's name. Deep down she still had some empathy for her former friend since they had been so close until she left the Horde to join the Rebellion. But, Catra *refused* her entreaties and stayed in the Fright Zone, clawing back in anger, climbing up the villainous hierarchy, loving the power she held. Clearly, she wanted to be one of those "calling the shots" as she had told Adora all that time ago.

Despite all that effort, what she dreamed of *never happened*, with Hordak still in charge. Although Adora didn't know the internal struggles Catra had endured, she had *lost faith* in her as a possible friend and only saw her as a villain out to cause harm. Perhaps that could change in the future, but at this point, her mind was set against Catra.

Without saying anything, Adora nodded at Bow's request. Peri continued her video chat with Bow. "...sounds good. Would you like to talk again next week, you know as a thing we could do weekly?" Bow was *happy* to hear this. He told her that he was "up for that," and was even open to talking more often because it is "a bit hectic on the planet right now." She wished Bow the best of luck for the dehordification and his inventions.

The video call with Bow had ended, with Peri breathing a sigh of relief. On the other hand, Bow's conversation with Peri annoyed and bored Adora, although she liked talking to Glimmer. She felt left out. To remedy this, she had a marvelous plan: they could video chat with Carmen on V.I.L.E. Island. After consulting with Peri, Garnet, and Pearl, everyone agreed it would be a... good idea. Adora hoped she could make a courageous attempt to be better friends with Carmen, only stating to Peri that she'd like to talk to Carmen *alone*.

As A.C.M.E. agents, with Shadowsan, swept the entirety of V.I.L.E. Island, Carmen, Julia, and Amethyst continued to check the remaining V.I.L.E. facility, searching for any artifacts that could be added to their museum. All of them confidently believed that *no* V.I.L.E. operatives remained on the island, but each person remained on guard in case anything happened. Out of the blue, for Carmen at least, her phone began ringing. Grumbling, she took the phone out of her pocket and gazed at the screen. No caller ID came up, so she didn't answer it. She had a personal policy to not reply to spam callers or telemarketers who had *no lives of their own.*

Afterward, she received a text: "Hi, it's Peridot. Just called you. I'd like to chat. Please call back." Those words flustered her, with her internal monologue arrayed against herself for not answering Peri, a person she wanted to know better. From her observation, Peri was nice and friendly. In order to save face, she quickly called Peri back. "Peridot, I'm…sorry I didn't answer you before. Your number isn't in my phone yet. I added Stevonnie, but I haven't added yours."

Peri happily replied. "It's okay. Call me Peri or P-dot if you'd like. I don't need to be called by my full name... all the time."

Carmen was okay with using a nickname for her, since Peri was her friend, after all. She shared that Player called her by the name "Red" and her former friends called her "Carm," saying either of those names would be fine for her, thanking Peri for saving her "from those *terrible* candy people in Japan."

Peri appreciated the sentiment, but even with her social awkwardness, she wanted the conversation to continue. She asked, "How's V.I.L.E. Island treating you?" and noted that she seemed "a lot more dressed down than usual."

Carmen was more than happy to talk about her fashion choices. "This red v-neck t-shirt and grey sweatpants just feel more comfortable. I don't need to wear my wide-brim red hat or red trench coat *all the time*…"

Peri understood that as a person who could change her appearance at will, even *without* having to regenerate. "Have you found any data files in the V.I.L.E. servers yet?"

Moving back to a more serious tone, she explained what they were doing on V.I.L.E. Island. "We are *still* going through what we have and are almost finished sweeping the V.I.L.E. facility for information and artifacts. There's no reason to stay here much longer. Although it was *difficult* to come back here…I had to in order to serve justice."

Peri replied. She had a reason for making this call in the first place. But she wanted it to be a surprise. "Before I forget, there's *someone* who'd like to talk with you, who's included on this collect call. I'll put it on mute while you two talk."

Carmen didn't know who Peri meant and confusedly observed the screen. She could see a teenage woman curling her dark blonde hair with her index finger: her friend Adora. She sheepishly introduced herself. "Hi, Carmen! It's me, Adora. You know, the one who blushed after you arrived near the Beach House, enjoyed your unscripted song inside, helped you during that mission to Japan, and assisted you in the fight on V.I.L.E. Island, and in the planning stages…"

Carmen snickered, telling Adora she didn't need a preamble and could call her "Carm," asking what she wanted to talk about.

Nervously, Adora stepped out into the great unknown. She would be doing something she had never done before. "Well…I was thinking that we should get to know each other better. We could *hang out* and go to a movie, a form of entertainment Steven and Connie tell me is great, or something, you know, that friends do. I love your outfit by…the way."

Carmen *did not* expect this from Adora, not at all. She wanted to be clear she knew what Adora meant. "Are you asking me out *on a date*? I wasn't expecting something like that from you. Thanks for the compliment…this is *one* of my favorite fashion looks apart from the *trademark* red trench coat and hat, you know."

Although she wasn't sure about the exact language, she believed that Carmen was right. She told her, "If that's what it's called, then…yes?"

While Garnet snickered, Pearl let out a yelp of "whaaat!?" She didn't expect Adora to *be so bold*, with the shock washing over her face. She had hoped to show her the world she knew and loved. Chuckling at their reactions, Adora rapidly rejoined the conversation before Carmen could say another word.

"Don't mind Pearl. We are good friends now and she's completely accepting. After all, she had a long relationship with this large peach-skinned woman with long, curly pink hair, who wore a flowing white dress, resembling a rose, called Rose if…I remember right. *She's cool.*"

Carmen quickly replied, saying "Adora, I don't mind it at all. Where would you like to go?"

In no time at all, Adora responded. "I want to experience something I couldn't see on Etheria. There were *no stars* there. While the planet had its beauty, it continued to be plagued by war, so couldn't explore. Bring me somewhere new and exciting...pretty please?"

Carmen was excited. She knew it was a tough call, but she wanted to go somewhere new, telling Adora that she had "been to so many exhilarating places as a master thief, whether in Northern India, the Indian Islands, Indonesia, Eastern Australia, Ecuador, the Grand French Republic, California... or the Swiss Republic." She also mentioned the Australian Islands, Rizalia, Turkistine, Mozambique, the Brazilian Coastal Republic, Hawaii, Lova Bilci, and the Mexican Islands. She added that the Floridian Archipelago was picturesque.

Adora accepted that, and snickered. "*Anything* to get out of this dreadful cold environment. *Somewhere warm* would be nice. I'd love that."

Carmen asked for when she'd like the date, noting that she is free after she finished examining this V.I.L.E. junk. She proposed next Wednesday *at lunch time*.

Adora agreed, with Carmen telling her to "dress for the warm weather" and that she'd see her then.

Carmen clicked off the phone and danced around in delight. She had *never* felt this alive in her life. While Amethyst toyed with her, Julia's face dropped, gazing up at Carmen with sad eyes. Seeing her disposition, Carmen walked over to her and outstretched her arms, asking if a hug would suffice. Crying, she said it would be *okay.* Carmen whispered in her ear: "It's all right. I'm your friend and I like you too." Julia hugged her back.

Back in Siberia, Pearl bawled her eyes out. She *angrily* glared at Adora, thinking she had abandoned and *left her behind* in the dust. Lashing out, she started berating her.

"How can you do this to me? I was going to bring you on a world tour to all the great existing Gem sites like Mask Island, the Shooting Star Shrine in China, the Sand Castle in the Northern African Republic, Rose's Fountain in Olgut, and the Galaxy Warp. I really wanted to take you to the Ancient Sky Arena, the Sky Spire, and the Strawberry Battlefield. You *RUINED* all of this!"

Adora had not expected this. She tried to reassure Pearl. "It's all right. I didn't know you had this whole thing planned for me. We can still go on this tour *if you'd like*. I can be friends with you and Carmen at the same time. I don't like you any less just because I'm doing this 'date' with her."

Pearl apologized, and admitted that her "insecurities bubble up at the most inopportune times" and proposed having a date with her in a couple of weeks. Adora told her that she didn't need to apologize, but that she wanted to go to places on Earth that were exciting and unique, hoping that nothing got in the way, not even the upcoming trial for Catra.

Pearl told her to talk to Peridot and others in Beach City about their plans. Adora said that sounded "swell" and said "let's do it!"

Adora and Pearl continued talking. Since Peri had the chat on mute, she didn't know what they were saying. Irritated, Adora texted her: "Peri, unmute your video chat. We'd like to talk to you."

She speedily rectified her error and started chatting: "Sorry about that! After the conversation with Carmen ended, both of you were arguing and I didn't want to get involved. Adora, Pearl, is everything alright?"

Adora answered. "Peri, *you don't* need to worry. Pearl just had an emotional outburst and I explained myself, so she calmed down."

Pearl said that Adora had been accurate in her assessment. She added, "negative thoughts invaded my brain and I thought she would abandon me for Carmen. I know Steven told me that Adora *wouldn't* leave me behind, but my deep-seated fear and insecurity resurfaced *like an exploding volcano*."

Peri asked her how the talk with Carmen went, and Adora replied that it went great, noting she "asked her out on a 'date,' whatever that is. It's going to be this upcoming Wednesday, about a week from now. We are going to have lunch in the Floridian Archipelago. I'm so excited!"

Peri congratulated Adora but asked her how she would get there. Adora face-palmed herself. She admitted she had been so enthusiastic that she forgot about that. Desperate, she asked "…wait, Lapis, can you fly me there?" Lapis agreed. She asked when and where it was happening. Adora told her it was at the Floridian Archipelago next Wednesday at noon, a location that Lapis was familiar with.

Adora thanked her, asking if she could fly her "grand and sweeping way so she can gaze up in awe at my arrival." Even Lapis agreed to this, and said it was *her pleasure* "to help wonderful friends like you."

The video chat had come to an end, with Peri wishing everyone else a good rest of their day. New energy, a new lease on life *flowed through* Adora's body like a rushing river. That feeling faded a bit as her shivering returned, thinking of herself as a person trapped inside the unpleasant secret Siberian base of A.C.M.E., "guarding" prisoners. Not even the Kingdom of Snows in Etheria compared to these temperatures. She suggested to Pearl they go on a walk to get a breath of fresh air. Observing their emotional tension, Garnet proposed that she could stay behind to guard the prisoners.

Before going into the cold air, Adora grabbed a white fluffy coat, emblazoned with the A.C.M.E. logo, off a metal rack in the room's coat closet. She grabbed a ushanka hat on the shelf above the coat rack and a pair of felt gloves, both with the same logo. Reverberating from her yanking motion, the metal hangar clanged against the wall. Unlike Adora, Pearl didn't put a hat, coat, or anything on, surprising her.

As they stepped toward the door, Adora fastening the hat at the chin to protect her face and head from frigid temperatures, Garnet gave them a thumbs up. Once outside, the wind whipped around them. Snowdrifts covered the landscape as far as the eye could see. Adora hoped to talk to Pearl so they could gain a better understanding of each other. She couldn't do so because wind currents made it nearly impossible to hear what the other person was saying.

This changed when both settled down in a nearby ice cave which Pearl discovered, escaping the biting cold. "Pearl, as you know…I'm an orphan from one planet who crash-landed on another planet. Rather than talking about myself, I'd like to hear more about you and your birthplace instead."

Pearl explained where she came from and *why* it mattered. "I came from a place far away known as Homeworld, with a rigid caste system created by White Diamond as part of a so-called 'perfect empire.' I was created to serve Pink Diamond, replacing her old Pearl, as she got a new colony, this

planet, Earth. The plan was to hollow it out so Gems could be created. But... she fell in love with this planet and changed her form."

With Adora listening intently, Pearl continued her story. She told her that:

> *"Pink pleaded with the fellow Diamond leaders to not complete the colony and preserve life on Earth…but nothing worked. She started a rebellion in her alter ego, Rose Quartz, intending to scare the Gems away. She continued to plead with Blue and Yellow Diamond to end the colonization, but they didn't listen. After Rebellion's many years, more and more came to her side, I helped her with one bold and final move: to fake her own death, her shattering as they called it. I transformed into her alter ego, Rose Quartz, holding her Gem in my hand, so everyone would think Rose had killed Pink Diamond. This changed everything. Earth was deemed to be a place not viable for a colonization, so they began experimenting on it, bringing together gem shards of our fallen comrades to create a secret geo-weapon. Then, the Homeworld Gems were told to leave Earth and the three remaining Diamonds, White, Blue, and Yellow released a blinding light, corrupting all Gems caught within its grasp, except for myself, Amethyst, and Garnet, protected by Rose's shield. An utterly horrifying sight..."*

Sighing, she continued, seeing that Adora remained fascinated and engaged. She told her that she had only given a quick summary, leaving out the fact that she didn't tell *anyone* about Rose's real identity until relatively recently after Steven discovered the truth by accident. It was tough, as she struggled to restrain her emotions.

"We then had to deal with corrupted Gems…which we bubbled since we didn't know what else to do with them. Fast forward to the last century where Rose met this long-haired human, a failed rockstar apparently, named Greg. I thought she loved me, but she *fell in love* with this human and I…"

Adora asked who Greg was. Pearl didn't want to explain it. But, she wanted to get closer to Adora, so she agreed to tell her the truth. "Greg and Rose fell into a deeper relationship, as she became more accepting of others, and she decided to give up her form…less than 20 years ago, to create Steven. She *was GONE!* I miss her every day!"

Pearl began to cry, tears flowing down her cheeks like a waterfall. It was more than what Adora had ever seen before. She decided to calm her down, hugging her. "It's okay, Pearl. I get you are sad, but Steven is something wonderful, a person, a being, a human-gem hybrid to be exact, who can grow and change."

She did wonder one thing. *How* could Pearl stand these cold temperatures? She asked her point-blank. "By the way, how are you not freezing out here? I'm *barely* warm even when wearing this hat, gloves, and coat."

Pearl chuckled. She hoped that Adora would understand. "Oh, my physical form is *a manifestation of light*. We might seem humanoid in our appearance, but our Gems give us all the subsistence we need, meaning that it isn't necessary to eat. Similarly, temperatures of this world, or any world, do not affect us."

Adora asked about Lapis, Peri, and Amethyst, who ate food. Pearl shook her head. She said that while that is the case, "there is *no need* for them to eat or sleep, despite the fact they can do so."

Without warning, shaking with excitement and seeing an opportunity that would never come again, Pearl spun around, her eyes sparkling. Flirtatiously, she coiled strands of her peach hair with her

index finger and spoke to Adora face-to-face. "Do you still feel cold under that heavy coat and fur hat? I have *an idea* that will knock your socks off…"

Adora was intrigued. After noting that she was still trembling from the cold, she inquisitively asked "what's your brilliant plan?"

Pearl sighed. She blurted out something she was thinking and *hoped* Adora wouldn't get angry with her for it. "...we should fuse! It's the *most* intimate and personal action Gems can do to bring themselves together."

Adora admitted that she felt nervous about it and remarked that she could mess it up. Pearl agreed to walk her through it, saying she just had to do an elegant dance with her and *then* they could fuse together. Nodding, Adora could at least understand the dancing part, at minimum. "Oh, like the dancing I did at the Princess Prom. I could do that! I'm willing to give it a try."

While Pearl didn't know what "Princess Prom" referred to, she began dancing gracefully like a ballerina and extended her hand outward. Adora grabbed it eagerly. As they twirled around, Adora grasped her around the waist. As Pearl dipped down, she stared up at bluebell eyes and brown eyebrows with satisfaction. Suddenly a flash of white light exploded, filling the ice cave with intense color.

The being that emerged had mid-length very soft orange hair, with a slender, athletic build. She wore a white puffy coat with an A.C.M.E. symbol over top of a reddish cyan jacket with a blonde-colored star on the back, covering a long-sleeved whitish teal shirt. She also had on light pinkish-gray slip-on pants with a belt and slip-on reddish boots. Her pearl gem still sat in her forehead, but she had blackish-brown eyebrows over medium blue eyes. Like Stevonnie, she was half-human and half-Gem. Unlike them, she had extremely soft orange skin and four arms!

She let out a yelp of joy, enthusiastic to be in her new perfect and grand form. Before she returned to the base, she sprinted out of the ice cave, through snowdrifts, doing cartwheels and handstands. After having so much fun, she self-confidently opened the door into the A.C.M.E. facility, finding Garnet sitting with her arms folded, meditating.

This partially humanoid being cried out "we fused!" Opening her eyes, she gleefully gaped up at the human-Gem hybrid. "Pearl…Adora…Peadora…what do you think of being fused together?"

Peadora remarked, "Oh, it's so much fun! I thoroughly enjoy this already. I feel like a *totally new* person…a new being who can do so much! Peri, Lapis, and the others should see this!"

Back in the Beach House, Peri, Lapis, Connie, and Steven had started playing one of their favorite card games, shanghai rummy. Bismuth worked outside, trying to improve the Peri-Shack so Peri and Lapis could have a more permanent home. Peri gazed perplexedly at her tablet after seeing a video chat request from Pearl's phone.

When she accepted, the being she saw made her shudder with a jolt. "What…are you? A fusion? You seem a little like Pearl and…a little like Adora."

Peadora responded. "Hi, Peri and everyone else. We are not Pearl and Adora separately but are together as one! You could call us 'Peadora,' a delightful name Garnet came up with."

When Peri asked her if she had discovered her powers yet, and what abilities she had, she responded, saying "I'm not completely sure, but I am *physically fit and athletic*, and can summon items from my Gem, like a comb to brush through my beautiful orange hair, scissors to cut it, a clock to tell time, and a cleaver to attack enemies, ha. I couldn't do this on Etheria and I'm so glad that Pearl suggested this as something."

While Lapis chuckled and smiled, Steven and Connie peered at Peadora with interest. Their fusion reminded them of Stevonnie. Instead of speaking in unison, they proposed a plan, hugging each other and fusing before the video screen. They agreed to go somewhere together, as fusions together, part of Pearl's proposed world tour.

She stopped speaking. Pearl, ashamed this had been mentioned, wanted to un-fuse, but Adora *convinced* her they needed to stay together as one being and see this through.

"…Adora. I apologize for stopping…but we had to consult with each other in order to ensure we were doing the right thing. But, yes, we'd *love* to go on a date with you!"

Stevonnie tried to explain the value of their fusion. They noted, "We make sure that as a fusion that what we are doing is comfortable with *our two parts*, Steven and Connie. Consent is key to a workable fusion." They added that a date could work as a "friend thing," and they would think of a place they "adore," something that Pearl and Adora were *fine with*. They promised to see them both in Beach City soon.

The call ended abruptly with a yelp of delight from Peadora. As the sun set on the horizon, with the outside light fading, she laid down on a cot, cuddling for warmth in a sleeping bag, and resting her head on a soft pillow. Garnet laid on the ground. She was "perma-fusion" which brought together Ruby and Sapphire, who loved each other deeply and were always together.

Even though they could have unfused, Adora and Pearl *wanted* the experience to last, and were tired, wanting to rest until the next day. Whatever would come in the days, weeks, and months to come, Pearl and Adora were closer to each other than they had ever been, like peas in a pod, with a strong emotional bond *between two kindred souls*.

End Notes

The page on Paper Star on the Carmen Sandiego wiki, the pages on Bow and Adora on the She-Ra wiki, the Timeline and Pearl pages on the Steven Universe Wiki, the Wikipedia page titled "List of Candies," a fan art of Paper Star, and a description of candy people from a certain show, were used for reference. Also, Kathy Steinemanns' "100+ Ways to Say 'Blush': A Word List for Writers" was helpful in removing my previous mentions of the word "blush" and making them more descriptive so you could know the motivations of the character, along with other instances where I would have used the same word.

In determining the final color of the fusion, I used the hex color for Adora's dark blonde hair (#C8A961), finding the name and Pearl's peach hair (#FCCCB1), with the descriptions from their respective pages, with both further than what is sometimes defined as "blonde" (#FAF0BE) or “peach” (#FFE5B4). The wikihow page of "How to Get the Hex Code of a Color on Your Computer Screen" was helpful, as all I had to was download the images of Pearl and Adora and open them in GIMP and ta-da, there was the hex color code! It was so simple! I then inputted this information into W3School's HTML color mixer, where you get a very soft orange (#e2ba89), doing the same with skin color with Pearl's ivory skin (fffff4) and Adora's pinkish skin (#FCC89C), you get another version of very soft orange (#fee4c8).

Works inspired by this one

Rise of the Scarlet Wildcat by lefemmerouge

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